

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CPR-01 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SSO-00 SSC-01 /060 W

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P R 111115Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1539

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2747

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINR, AG

SUBJ: DEATH OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR AHMED MEDEGHRI:

RECOMMENDATION THAT SECRETARY SEND MESSAGE

OF CONDOLENCE

1. ALGERIA IS MOURNING TODAY OVER DEATH OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR AHMED MEDEGHRI AT 1230 DECEMBER 10 IN ALGIERS. ACCORDING TO PRESS, DEATH WAS "ACCIDENTAL" AND COMMISSION HEADED BY MINHEALTH HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO DETERMINE CAUSE. THREE DAYS NATIONAL MOURNING HAVE BEEN DECLARED AND FONMIN BOUTEFLIKA AND MININDUSTRY AND ENERGY ABDESSELAM ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN FROM NEW YORK AND VIENNA RESPECTIVELY TO ATTEND FUNERAL DECEMBER 12.

2. AS MININTERIOR, MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF REVOLUTION AND CLOSE COMPANION AND CONFIDANT OF PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE SINCE PRE-INDEPENDENCE DAYS WITH NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (OUJDA GROUP), MEDEGHRI WAS MEMBER OF ALGERIA'S INNER RULING CIRCLE. A HARD WORKER WITH GIFT FOR ORGANIZATION, HE WAS MOVING FORCE BEHIND ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF LAST SUMMER AND EARLIER CREATION OF COMMUNAL AND WILAYA ASSEMBLIES. HE ALSO OVERSAW ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES (SURETE NATIONALE). BEYOND

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BEING TRUSTED ADVISOR OF BOUMEDIENE, HE WAS ELEMENT OF

STABILITY IN GOVERNMENT AND WILL BE SORELY MISSED. HE WILL ALSO BE ESPECIALLY MISSED BY BOUTEFLIKA WITH WHOM HE FREQUENTLY JOINED FORCES IN INNER SANCTUM POLITICAL WRANGLING.

3. WHILE CAUSE OF DEATH HAS NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED, WE SUSPECT IT WAS NATURAL. MEDEGHRI HAD NEVER FULLY RECOVERED FROM 1971 OPERATION FOR CANCER OF ALIMENTARY CANAL/ESOPHAGUS AND HIS HEALTH HAD DECLINED SERIOUSLY IN PAST FEW MONTHS. HE TIRED QUICKLY AND WAS REPORTEDLY TAKING DRUGS TO REDUCE PAIN.

4. ACTION REQUESTED. SINCE MEDEGHRI WAS OFFICIAL ESCORT OF SECRETARY DURING HIS OCTOBER VISIT TO ALGIERS, WE RECOMMEND THAT SECRETARY SEND MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE TO PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE MENTIONING MEDEGHRI'S SERVICE TO ALGERIAN NATION AND PEOPLE.
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